

3 December 2013

Recommendation Regarding the Use of Funding from the National Foundation for RTD for 2014

Based on the resolution adopted by the Board of Trustees of the National Foundation for RTD on 17 September 2013, the Austrian Council was invited by the head of the National Foundation for RTD in accordance with Section 11 Subsection 1 Item 1 of the law on the National Foundation for RTD to put forward a recommendation regarding the use of Foundation funding for the year 2014. The total volume of applications for 2014 amounts to 148.8 million euros. The Board of Trustees requested the Austrian Council to make a statement based on three possible scenarios with regard to the amount of Foundation funds available for 2014:

Scenario 1) 60 million euros

Scenario 2) 70 million euros

Scenario 3) 80 million euros

In times of tight public-sector budgets, the National Foundation plays an especially important role, which is manifested in the provision of support for long-term, interdisciplinary research (cf. Section 2 of the National Foundation for Research, Technology and Development Act). The allocation of funding was carried out according to the strategic significance and socio-political relevance of the projects submitted and how they fit into the overall context of Austrian research funding. In its recommendation from 6 June 2013, the Austrian Council additionally defined the following priorities for the allocation of funding for 2014:

- Strengthening research infrastructure by focusing on initiatives with a relevant critical mass and risk potential
- Strengthening the national human potential base
- Strengthening venture capital
- Strengthening the contribution of intellectual property rights to growth and innovation
- Strengthening innovation potential by means of Open Innovation
- Coordination and alignment of regional and federal RTI activities
- Excellence in basic research
- Measures to strengthen Austria as a location for companies engaged in research

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Recommendation

The applications for funding from the National Foundation submitted by recipients are basically consistent with the Austrian Council's recommendation regarding key areas dated 6 June 2013 and are therefore, in principle, eligible for support.

Against the background of the Austrian Council's recently published white paper on the RTI system, the LBG should be merged with the CDG. This information will be communicated with the recommendation for the year 2014 and should be taken into account when making applications for 2015. Following an extensive consultation process and bearing in mind the financing scenarios communicated by the National Foundation, the Austrian Council for RTD recommends that funds be allocated as follows:

Institution	Programme	Amount requested in EURmn	Scenario 1 Recomm. EUR 60 mn.	Scenario 2 Recommendation EUR 70 mn.	Scenario 3 Recomm. EUR 80 mn.	Reasons - Comment
FFG	Headquarters – New	25	4	5	6	An appropriate financial input is required if the Headquarter Strategy is to be properly implemented and it can be plausibly argued that this is provided with the 25 million euros requested. The FFG has made improvements to the restructured Competence Headquarter programme on the basis of the evaluation. The Austrian Council recommends the allocation of funding for a pilot programme.
FFG	Services Initiative - DLI	10	4	4	4	As the Services Initiative (DLI) addresses a relatively young area of research promotion, experience with it is limited. An evaluation of the activities to date should be carried out by 2015. The Austrian Council therefore recommends that funding should be granted in order to generate a suitable basis for the evaluation.
FFG	Research partnerships	12,6	7,5	7,5	7,5	Strengthening human capital and the linkage with training programmes in accordance with the needs of industry is an important objective, and one which is also called for by the various national and European strategy documents. As the application for the research partnerships fulfils this goal, the Austrian Council recommends that an appropriate amount of funding should be provided.
FFG	Bridge	30	5,9	9,4	9,9	Bridge is an important instrument for collaboration between science and business. The Austrian Council therefore recommends a long-term allocation of funding as in previous years.

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FWF / FFG	Translational Research		3,9	3,9	3,9	„Translational Research is the second pillar of the successful bridging programme. The Austrian Council has already expressed its regret in previous statements that the FWF has had to withdraw from the bridging programme for budgetary reasons. The FWF and FFG are called upon to submit a proposal for the joint management of this part of the bridging programme by March 2014. If the Board of Trustees is unable to allocate funding to this programme due to technicalities, the Austrian Council proposes that half the funding proposed here should be allocated to the FFG's Bridge programme and the other half to the special research areas (SFBs) and doctoral colleges of the FWF.
FWF	SFBs und DKs	19,1	12	15	19	The special research areas are an excellent interdisciplinary research approach with a very high quality that makes exacting demands on research and teaching. The doctoral colleges are instruments to train young highly-qualified academic researchers. However, given the total amount of money that is available, the amount of funding will have to be reduced under the first two scenarios.
FWF	Matching Funds	2,87	2,9	2,9	2,9	Matching Funds is an innovative governance model to promote an efficient integration of federal and provincial funding and in particular follows the priorities and recommendations of the Austrian Council. Funding in the full amount is recommended.
ÖAW	New Frontiers Groups	8	4	4	4	The ÖAW programme New Frontiers Groups is a high-risk approach to establish new research topics and offers young scientists the opportunity to work on cutting-edge topics independently. In the spirit of the Austrian Council's recommendation to enable a greater amount of risk in research funding, a corresponding funding allocation is recommended..
ÖAW	Imaging	3,5	0	0	0	Imaging is another ÖAW research infrastructure project and should strengthen cooperation in this area. Imaging is a very fast developing field of research which is hugely important in a great many disciplines. However, given the amount of funding that is available and the comparatively low impact on the RTI structure as a whole, the Austrian Council does not recommend that

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						funding be awarded.
ÖAW	Digital Humanities	4,44	1	1	4	The programme supports the development of state-of-the-art research infrastructure in the humanities, social and cultural sciences in combination with state-of-the-art information technologies. The research infrastructure for the humanities, social and cultural sciences in particular is under pressure in a number of forms and this programme therefore provides a good opportunity to raise the visibility of data and results from these areas of research. Due to its design, Digital Humanities is a suitable instrument for networking scientific data. However, given the amount of funding that is available and the relatively low impact on the RTI structure and the prioritisation of the New Frontiers Groups, only a limited amount of funding as a pilot project is recommended.
LBG	Neo-Latin Studies	1,91	0	0	0	The continuation of the Institute for Neo-Latin Studies makes sense, but should be reconsidered in 2014 against the background of the evaluation which will then be available. A new application is recommended..
LBG	Open Innovation Competence	2,14	2,1	2,1	2,1	The planned build-up of open innovation competence is consistent with the Austrian Council's priority recommendation made in 2014.
LBG	Postdocs Health Sciences	2,69	0,8	0,8	0,8	The planned development of an international post-doc programme in health sciences is consistent above all with the goal of strengthening the human potential base. To be recommended as a pilot project. The pilot project should be evaluated after three years.
CDG	9 CD Labors	10,4	4,5	7	7	Regarding the applications to continue the proven CD Lab characteristics. As CD Labs play an important role in the knowledge transfer system, several of the CD Labs for which applications were submitted should be granted funding depending on the money that is available. The laboratories should be chosen in a bilateral consultation process by the Austrian Council and the governing bodies of the CDG.
aws	Venture Capital Initiative	5,39	5,4	5,4	5,4	The venture capital initiative addresses the absolute weak point of the Austrian RTI landscape. With the planned inclusion of the

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						ERDF funds it is also very innovative in programme terms. Funding in the full amount should be available in all 3 scenarios.
aws	Service Innovation	3,45	2	2	3,5	A new idea that picks up on the very important trend of innovative services and links it with the necessary increase in venture capital for start-up teams in this sector.
aws	SME Internationalisation	7,3	0	0	0	In the context of the BMVIT initiative "Haus der Zukunft" an innovative funding concept that addresses the topic of intellectual property as well as the aspect of internationalisation. The project deserves to be funded depending on the availability of resources. However, as other aws applications for 2014 have been given priority, it is not possible to recommend the allocation of funding.
Summe	In Mio. EUR	148,8	60,0	70,0	80,0	